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## MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

THE threatening appearances which presented themselves to the view of the politician at the close of the last month, have at length been realized; uncertainty is removed, or to speak more properly, our anxiety is transferred from the origin of the war to its result. We see all the powers of Europe with a strange fatality presenting themselves singly and successively to the sword of Bonaparte, as if their main object in resisting was to augment the splendours of his triumph.

The Spanish war is still protracted. It is the dying embers of a mighty conflagration, that sends forth intermitting sparks, raising a momentary expectation that the flame is about to break out afresh, but in reality only hastening the period of utter extinction. The Junta of Seville still performs the functions of a legislative and executive body; and Spanish armies are still heard of. Rumour catches at every whisper, and the exultation of victory one day is checked by the gloom of treachery, and defeat on the next. We are told that the people of Galicia, irritated by the ill treatment of their ferocious masters, are again up in arms, and have signalized themselves by some successful attacks, in consequence of which Marshal Soult, who commands the French forces in that part, has found it necessary to retreat into Portugal. His retreat, if it be the fact, has been attended with advantageous circumstances to his cause. The city of Oporto, after a defence not very creditable to the military character of the Portuguese, has surrendered, and our troops still remaining in that country, seem to afford the only hope of preserving the capital from again becoming the headquarters of the invading army. So conscious are the Portuguese of their incapacity, that an English officer, General Beresford, has been appointed Generalissimo of the Portuguese army. He has commenced his operations by a Manifesto. That an English General, accustomed to command freemen, should employ this as a preparative to rouse the energies of an

oppressed people into action, appears very natural, but of its effect on a nation of slaves, we cannot but entertain great doubts. The general character of the Portuguese gives rise to fears that success under the command of a foreigner may be as injurious as defeat. By this time the arrival of Sir Arthur Wellesley has augmented the English army in that country to a very great amount, and if ably seconded there can be no doubt of their retaining possession of the country against the forces at present brought against it. The advantages of the acquisition or the possibility of retaining it are more uncertain. An impoverished country, an effeminate nobility, a population either torpid or discontented, afford but little cause for encouraging the hope that much more benefit can be derived from the possession, than the excluding of the common enemy; the same causes, together with an extended frontier and a powerful force in reserve to overwhelm resistance seem to render the latter problematical. It must be evident to all, that if Portugal be retained, it must be retained by an English force, and such a force, as England scarcely can maintain without depriving other parts of the Empire of their proper means of defence, or supporting the military establishment in all parts, by an excessive drain from the population of the nation. The same reasoning bears also upon Spain. But the affairs of both these countries have already lost a great share of interest by the new antagonist that has started up to oppose the French Emperor in his rapid course of victory.

For the causes of the Austrian war, in order to avoid repetition, we refer the reader to the political retrospect of last month, in which it was asserted that it was forced on that unfortunate country by the domineering spirit of France, which would be satisfied with nothing but the total sacrifice of its independence. The Archduke's proclamation\* evinces this.

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\*See official Documents, p. 310.

He there declares that every concession consistent with the honour or safety of the empire had been ineffectually made, and that this is a war of self defence. A passage in his manifesto has excited much inquiry. He states that the exertions of the native army of Austria is to be seconded by external succours, it is not yet known what these succours are, conjecture at first turns upon the Emperor of Russia; but his interests are too closely implicated with those of his present ally to render a change advantageous, unless indeed, the visit of the Queen of Prussia may have effected an alteration in his political relations.

Prussia or some of the princes of the German confederation are thought by others, to be alluded to; disgusted as they may be with the servile vassalage under which they at present bow, it can hardly be thought that they would risk their all on such a precarious stake. England is also mentioned, and with great probability, while some go so far as to suppose that it is but a delusive ray of hope offered to encourage the desponding spirits of the Germans. Of men, we trust England will be very sparing; of treasure, we doubt not she will be lavish, profusely lavish; the augmentation of the loan for the current year from ten millions, as was lately stated with no small degree of triumphant exultation to fifteen millions, confirms this supposition. Of the two, the latter is no doubt preferable; commerce can supply new pecuniary resources;

But a bold Peasantry, their nation's pride,  
When once destroy'd can never be supplied.

On the present state of Turkey, and the probable consequences of the late tumultuary revolution there, we hazarded some conjectures; these, by the latest accounts appear to be realized; the capital is still in a state of ferment, the executive distracted, unsettled, and at the mercy of a nerve and lawless soldiery; the minister that calculates on effectual succour from such a government, must be very weak, or reduced to the greatest extremities.

Let us now turn our eyes to the North. The insurrection which broke

out in Sweden at the close of last month, has assumed the features of a permanent well concerted revolution. The people or a great majority of them, irritated by the destructive war in which they had been so long and so unsuccessfully engaged, and attributing the loss of national honour and territory partly to the loss of their old system of government, and partly to the imputed incapacity of the present possessor of their usurped rights, all sighed for the termination of a war by which nothing could be gained and all might be lost. The Russians had had possession of Finland and several of the islands; they threatened still greater encroachments; the commerce of the country was in a great measure annihilated; the king was disliked by most, and living in a state of austere seclusion, an imitator of his immortal predecessor, without his abilities, increased the public odium by the comparison of the state of Sweden at each period. The opportunity was favourable, and men were found with ability sufficient to take advantage of it. The Duke of Sudermania, supported by the army, seized on the government, and imprisoned the king, when making a vain attempt at resistance. His subsequent proclamations are well adapted to make a favourable impression on the people, by holding out the restoration of their former mixed form of government, and promising to call a Diet speedily. The beginning of May is fixed for that purpose. Till then our judgment of the revolutionists must be suspended. In the mean time it is said that the king's cause has been espoused by a large party of his subjects. If so, a civil war must ensue, the consequence of which will be, the interference of Russia, either as arbiter or ally, an interference in either case equally fatal to the independence, we may say the existence of the Swedish monarchy.

England has had a gleam of success, to lighten the gloom which succeeded the disgraceful evacuation of Spain. Disgraceful it was, not to the army, for their excellence has been acknowledged, even by the enemy; but to the ministry, whose misconduct forced a gallant officer into a situation where he was prevented from acting from his own judgment, and suffered the mortification

of seeing one of the finest armies that ever was destined to revive the ancient fame of Britain, moulder away under all the hardships of unsuffered defeat and flight. In the West Indies, the surrender of fort Bourbon has reduced the whole island of Martinique. In a commercial point of view, the acquisition cannot be thought very valuable, at a time when the want of a vent for West Indian commodities is so severely felt. As a military post, its possession may be necessary, by depriving the enemy of a receptacle for the privateers which so incessantly annoyed our trade. The French squadron, which after its escape from Brest, had taken refuge in Basque roads, has been nearly destroyed.

Of the squadron which had been observed in a southern latitude no accounts have as yet reached England.

With respect to domestic concerns, although the inquiry into the abuses of the military departments of government has terminated, its effects have not yet ceased. It was indeed of a nature fitted to excite a spirit of investigation and reform not easily to be checked or stifled. It has extended; the voice of the people has gone forth, and will be heard. Meeting after meeting in every part of England are the organs of this universal voice. At first it was weak and timid, with difficulty causing itself to be heard in the metropolis. But the opposition it met with served only to rouse the spirit of the people. They felt that opposition in such a case was adding insult to injury. Succeeding events have increased the eagerness for investigation and reform. Many circumstances which transpired during the inquiry, have proved the existence of similar abuses in other departments. The management of the East India company's affairs in particular have come under an investigation before a committee of the house of commons, in the course of which, amongst a number of instances of corruption and undue influence, one has appeared which seems to implicate a nobleman, who stands much higher in the good opinion of the royal cabinet than in the confidence of the people. The part of the evidence before the house, respecting him, tends to involve him in

a traffic of East India appointments for increasing his parliamentary influence. His conduct will no doubt be the subject of a more particular inquiry.

It is much to be regretted that this inquiry had not taken place some years earlier; the affairs of Ireland would then have formed a part of it, and we should have been made acquainted with the secret means by which the union was effected and the actors in that memorable tragedy of the death of Irish independence exhibited in their proper characters.— But the time is now past, and the people of this country ought to change useless regret into an active sentiment of co-operation with the friends of reform in England, as the only means to compensate for the loss they have suffered.

Sentiments of surprise and disappointment have been raised in the breasts of many on observing the apathy with which the parliamentary transactions are received in this country. It is certainly matter of grief, but not of surprise or disappointment. Suffering under the effects of a civil commotion, the wounds of which have scarcely yet had time to heal, deprived, by the suspension of the habeas corpus act, of the blessings of that constitution whose fundamental principle is the right of personal liberty and private property, with the sword of power hung up *in terrorem* over the head of every individual in the kingdom, an arbitrary power granted to the British Minister cutting the hair by which it is suspended, and crushing at will the victim of his displeasure, it were indeed matter of surprise and wonder if the nation would venture fully to express its feelings. Yet notwithstanding these awful impediments, such is the sensation excited by the recent discoveries, that it has extracted an expression of indignation. The city of Derry has voted an address of thanks to Colonel Wardle, the town of Belfast is about to second its resolutions. It has been said that the latter place should have been among the first to come forward on such an occasion. We think otherwise. It is not the first burst of popular indignation, stimulated by the voice of dis-

contented partizans: it is the solemn, matured well digested sentiment of all, in a cause where all are concerned, where the voice of party is unheard, where the very existence of party is lost in the universal feeling excited by such a vital blow at the honour and existence of the nation.

Next month we shall have the pleasure of announcing the resolutions of the meeting convened for this purpose. We are confident they will be worthy of the place whence they come, and the cause by which they are excited. We are confident that they will make some impression; happy, if they lead to the point to which they are directed, by turning the minds of the directors of our nation from private interest to public welfare; and teaching them this most important truth, that "REFORM ALONE CAN PREVENT REVOLUTION."

### OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

#### PROCLAMATION OF THE ARCHDUKE CHARLES.

"*Vienna, April 6.* The protection of our country calls us to new exploits. As long as it was possible to preserve peace by means of sacrifices, and as long as these sacrifices were consistent with the honour of the throne, with the security of the state, and with the welfare of the people, the heart of our bountiful Sovereign suppressed every painful feeling in silence; but when all endeavours to preserve happy independence from the insatiable ambition of a foreign conqueror prove fruitless, when nations are falling around us, and when lawful sovereigns are torn from the hearts of their subjects—when, in fine, the danger of universal subjugation threatens even the happy states of Austria, and their peaceable, fortunate inhabitants—then does our country demand its deliverance from us, and we stand forth in its defence.

"On you, my dear brother-soldiers, are fixed the eyes of the universe, and of all those who feel for national honour and national prosperity. You shall not share the disgrace of becoming the tools of oppression. You shall not carry on the endless wars of ambition under distant climes. Your blood shall never flow for foreign fleets and foreign covetousness; not on you shall the curse alight of annihilating innocent nations; and over the bodies of slaughtered defenders of their country to pave the way for a foreigner to the usurped throne. A happier lot awaits you; the liberty of Eu-

rope has taken refuge under our banners. Your victories will loose their fetters, and your brothers in Germany, yet in the ranks of the enemy, long for their deliverance. You are engaged in a just cause, otherwise I should not appear at your head.

"On the fields of Ulm and Marengo, whereof the enemy so often remind us with ostentatious pride, on these fields will we renew the glorious deeds of Wurtzburgh and Ostrach, of Lipsingen, (Stockach) and Zurich, of Verona, of the Trebbia and Novi. We will conquer a lasting peace for our country; but this great aim is not to be attained without great virtues. Unconditional subordination, strict discipline, persevering courage, and unshaken steadiness in danger, are the companions of true fortitude. Only an union of will, and a joint co-operation of the whole, lead to victory.

"My Sovereign and brother has invested me with extensive powers, to reward and to punish. I will be everywhere in the middle of you, and you shall receive the first thanks of your country from your general on the field of battle. The patriotism of many of the Austrian nobility has anticipated your wants; this is a pledge in the fullest measure of the public gratitude; but punishment shall, with inflexible vigour, fall on every breach of duty: merit shall meet with reward, and offence with animadversions without distinction of person or rank; branded with disgrace shall the worthless person be cast out to whom life is dearer than his and our honour.—Adorned with the marks of public esteem, will I present to our Sovereign and to the world, those brave men who have deserved well of their country, and whose names I will ever carry in my heart.

"There remains one consideration, which I must put you in mind of; the soldier is only formidable to the enemy in arms; civil virtues must not be strangers to him: out of the field of battle, towards the unarmed citizens and peasants he is moderate, compassionate, and humane: he knows the evils of war, and strives to lighten them. I will punish every wanton excess with so much greater severity, as it is not the intention of our monarch to oppress neighbouring countries, but to deliver them from their oppressors, and to form with their princes a powerful bond, in order to bring about a lasting peace, and to maintain the general welfare and security.

"Soon will foreign troops, in strict union with us, attack the common enemy. Then, brave companions in arms! honour and support them as your brothers: not vain-